DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 490 EA 013 682

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TITLE A Study to Determine the Effectiveness of a Positive Approach to Discipline System for Classroom Management.
PUB DATE Apr 81
NOTE 16p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Los Angeles, CA, April 13-17, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Techniques: Corporal Punishment: *Discipline: *Discipline Policy: Grade 7: Junior High Schools: Suspension
IDENTIFIERS *Positive Approach to Discipline System: United States (Southwest)

ABSTRACT

To test the effectiveness of the Positive Approach to Discipline (PAD) System of classroom management, this study examined changes in the incidence of administrative disciplinary referrals, corporal punishment, and school suspensions in an urban Southwest public middle school. The 13-step PAD procedure--incorporating counseling, problem-solving, and time-out centers--was applied during one school quarter by 12 seventh-grade teachers trained in PAD techniques. Comparative data were collected for the quarters preceding and following the PAD application. The results showed a significant reduction in administrative referrals and school suspensions, but not in corporal punishment, during the quarter when PAD was in use. These findings indicate that the PAD system can be an effective method of school discipline and a potential asset to the educational process. (RW)

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A POSITIVE APPROACH TO DISCIPLINE SYSTEM FOR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATION
PRESENTED TO THE AMERICAN EDUCATION
RESEARCH ASSOCIATION IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

by

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EA 013 882

Dallas, Texas

April, 1981

INTRODUCTION

The concern of parents and educators for the proper decorum of the children in their care is not new, unusual, or unique. One archeologist reported that his transactions of the workings on an artifact dating back to ancient summaria proves that at least one adult was perplexed and troubled by the disobedience of a child four thousand years ago (Sprinthall, 1977). An elementary school teacher, employed in eighteenth century Massachusettes, reported that the disciplinary tactics he found necessary to use included rapping students about the head and face, wielding blows with canes, books, rods, and rulers, and forcing children to maintain painful postures such as kneeling on triangular blocks of wood or upon dried peas (Sussman, 1977).

Discipline has consistently remained a top priority among the public when it evaluates the schools. In fact, according to the Gallop Poll study on problems in the educational setting, discipline has been named as the primary problem eight times in the last nine years (Gallop, 1978).

Presently, in school districts throughout the courtry, thousands of students are suspended or expelled because of disruptive behavior in the school setting (Neill, 1977). Many of these students, after being suspended, never re-enter school to complete their education. These students have often been stereotyped as bad, maladjusted, slow, troubled, learning disabled, nonconformists, or worse. Teachers unable to cope with the unacceptable behaviors of these students often resort to administrative, conventional methods of discipline (Sussman,1977).

Recent data have shown that 80 to 85 percent of all discipline problems originate within the classroom setting. Urban school districts do not permit teachers to paddle students for violating policies governing behavior. Many teachers feel handicapped without the liberty of administering corporal punishment. Thus, all too often, teachers are relying heavily on administrative control of the school setting, including classroom management.

A variety of attempts at correcting student behavior are being tried, including the "get tough" approach by increasing corporal punishment and suspensions.

In one recent study, the findings indicated that as the grade level increased, so did the number of referrals to administration (Sussman, 1977). One anticipated product of this study was to provide teachers with an alternative to administrative referrals. This alternative should decrease the number of students subjected to corporal punishment and suspensions from school. The ultimate value of this study was to increase the level of learning on the part of students.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Study after study has shown that the negative approaches to discipline do not work and they are not consistent with developing the educational environment as a positive place to facilitate learning and motivate the student to achieve his/her maximum potential.

The National Education Association in several of its studies has recommended that educators and educational policy makers adopt procedures for dealing with student disciplinary problems in a positive way that support the educational environment. The goals/objectives/approaches/methodologies/standards are supportive of the concepts and techniques of the Positive Approach to Discipline System for classroom management.

The primary goals and objectives of this research to determine the effectiveness of the Positive Approach to Discipline System are:

Goal/Objective 1: Equip staff with other skills to utilize in classroom setting in lieu of corporal punishment and other punitive forms of correcting unacceptable behavior.

Goal/Objective 2: Train teachers, administrators, counselors, and parents in the concepts and techniques of the Positive Approach to Discipline System.

Goal/Objective 3:- Reduce the number of suspensions in the secondary and elementary schools through the training of school personnel and parents.

Goal/Objective 4: Reduce the number of fights and other acts of violence in school through the training of school personnel and parents.

Goal/Objective 5: Reduce the level of vandalism in the secondary and elementary schools through the training of school personnel and parents.

Goal/Objective 6: Increase the level of self-discipline in building by placing the responsibility for discipline where it belongs, with the student.

Goal/Objective 7: Develop the strategy approaches to building a classroom communications system as a means of positive discipline with school personnel and parents.

Goal/Objective 8: Develop a step-by-step process for establishing a positive atmosphere for discipline in the elementary and secondary schools with personnel.

Goal/Objective 9: Develop a step-by-step process for involving the student/teacher/counselor/administrator/ parent in the Positive Approach to Discipline System.

Goal/Objective 10: Develop an acceptable alternative to be utilized in school setting in lieu of corporal punishment and suspension.

The aforementioned ten goals and objectives can be accomplished through seminars, workshops, conferences, and direct assistance to selected schools. The methods to be utilized in accomplishing these goals/objectives will be - lecture, role play, assimilation, discussion and case study.

The overall goal/objective is to determine whether the Positive Approach to Discipline (PAD) System can be utilized to assist school personnel, the educational process, and the student realizing his/her full potential.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The expected outcomes of this proposal are:

1. Staff will utilize a team approach as a result of step one in the PAD System in their roles as counselors.
2. Staff will utilize the concepts, skills and techniques provided by the thirteen step PAD System in their day-to-day counseling with students, parents, and colleagues.
3. Staff will be familiar with the theoretical foundations of the Positive Approach to Discipline System.
4. Staff will demonstrate the communication skills of the PAD System.
5. Staff will utilize the five step problem solving model of the PAD System.

6. Staff will utilize the contracting approach to problem solving, written and verbal of the PAD System.
7. Staff will utilize the plan for behavior management of the PAD System.
8. Staff will utilize the parents as a resource in behavior management of the PAD System.
9. Staff will utilize the PAD Center as their alternative to corporal punishment, suspensions and expulsions from school.
10. Staff will express a desire to participate in continuous training programs such as follow-up sessions of the PAD System.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The philosophy of the PAD System is based on the concepts of two components: Respect and Responsibility. Both components are not new to most educators, parents, or people in general. The philosophy simply suggests that when we take time to think about it - we all like for authority figures to treat us with respect. This same principle applies to teacher-student relationship in the classroom.

This article describes an approach to discipline which places much of the responsibility for students' behavior on students themselves and which equips teachers with systematic means for preventing many discipline problems and for dealing effectively with those which do occur. The Positive Approach to Discipline (PAD) grows out of William Glasser's (1965) Reality Therapy. The principles and methods of PAD can be used by administrators with parents, teachers, and students; by teachers with other teachers and with students and by students with other students.

The approach consists of thirteen steps (Allen, 1980):

1. Embrace the Philosophy

   This is the most critical step. The purpose of Step 1 is to change behaviors of the staff and make members of the staff aware of the possibility of functioning in a non-punitive way. Ideally, all school personnel, including secretaries, custodians, and volunteers as well as professionals, will be familiar with the philosophy and procedures of PAD.
2. Establish the atmosphere
3. Rules/Standards, post, review
4. Teach responsible behavior - curriculum, counseling
5. Provide the opportunity for success each day
6. Do something that can be interpreted as friendly

PAD demands much time and effort from teachers, yet, its developers contend that if steps 2-6 are conscientiously carried out, between 80 and 90 percent of students will behave appropriately.

Steps 7 through 9 are the student's responsibility and apply to the ten percent of students who do not respond to steps 2 through 6.

7. Tell the student to stop doing . . .
8. What are you doing?
9. We've got to get together to make a plan

The disruptive child is separated from others in the classroom in order to give the teacher an opportunity to continue teaching without interruption and to allow the child a chance to reflect on his/her behavior. If the unacceptable behavior continues, the teacher sends the student out of the classroom to a counselor or administrator. When the teacher, student and counselor or administrator reach an agreement, the child is readmitted to class.

Steps 10 through 12 are administrative responsibilites:
10. Discussions not working, provide a place to sit
11. Will not sit- reassign to PAD Center
12. Will not sit in PAD Center, go home and rest

Step 13 is a parent and community responsibility:
13. Refer to another agency

If the student has failed to respond at this point, he or she is suspended pending a parent conference or referred to a community agency, such as a youth action center, police department, or juvenile detention home.

The Pad Center

The PAD Center (Allen, 1978) serves as an on-campus suspension area that permits disruptive students to interact with teachers, counselors and administrators. Its primary purpose is to serve as an alternative to suspension from school.

The Center is often perceived by students as punishment, but it is intended as a place of reflection for students to work on a plan to correct their unacceptable behavior. When students report to the PAD Center, the teacher in charge conducts a conference to discuss the rules of the Center and to explain how offenders can earn their release. The teacher is also responsible to notify parents and teachers of the student's location and to request that teacher supply homework assignments.

Before a child returns to regular classes, he or she completes an agreement which all parties sign. While assigned to the

PAD Center, the student is not permitted to mingle with other students, nor does he or she participate in school activities. Students are not counted absent, and they receive credit for homework completed while in the Center. Students who refuse to abide by the rules of the Center are suspended from school. Upon completion of an agreement among all parties, a child is permitted to return to classes.

DATA SOURCE

A Study of Pad - A validation study of the PAD Program was carried out in a middle school located in an urban area of the Southwestern United States. The school enrolled about 1350 students in grades 7 and 8. The socioeconomic status of students' families ranged from very low to very high, and the ethnic background of the student body was approximately 60 percent Anglo, 35 percent black, and 5 percent Mexican-American.

Twelve seventh-grade teachers participated in the program. They were trained in the techniques of PAD before the program started. Data were collected during a ten-week quarter preceding initiation of the program, during the ten weeks the program was in operation, and during a ten-week period after the program ended.

The study was designed to answer the questions:

1. Will PAD result in a change in the proportions of students from each of the three ethnic groups who are referred to the administration?
2. Will PAD result in a change in the incidence of use of corporal punishment?
3. Will PAD result in a change in the number of students suspended from school?

An average of 22.67 students per week received administrative referrals during the ten weeks before the program started. While the program was in operation, that number dropped to 5.83 weekly, and in the ten week period following termination of the program, it averaged 15.33. Using analysis of variance, these means were found to differ at the .01 level of probability.

The pattern of referrals of students from all ethnic group (Anglo, Black, Mexican-American) was similar, dropping while the program was in operation and increasing after the program stopped. In the case of Anglo students, the mean number of referrals per week following the end of the program was greater was greater than during the ten week quarter preceding its start. The mean number of referrals of black students increased following the termination of the program, but it did not approach the level of the quarter preceding. Data on the average number of administrative referrals per week by ethnic background appear on Table I.

TABLE I

Mean Number of Administrative Referrals Per Week
by Ethnic Background of Student Before,
During, and After PAD

Ethnic Group	Before	During	After
Anglo	2.33	0.58	2.58
Black	19.83	5.17	12.50
Mexican American	0.67	0.08	0.25

Use of corporal punishment decreased slightly during the time the PAD Program operated, but in the quarter following the end of the program, its use rebounded. An average of 5.24 paddlings

were administered weekly during the ten weeks preceding the start of PAD; an average of 4.76 students were paddled each week during the time the program was in operation; and in the quarter following the end of the program, an average of 7.10 students received corporal punishment. Analysis of variance showed no statistically significant differences in these means.

The third question had to do with the number of students suspended from school under PAD. The mean number of out-of-school suspensions increased slightly during the time the PAD Program operated, then dropped in the quarter following its termination. During the quarter preceding the start of the program, 2.48 students were suspended weekly on the average; suspensions averaged 2.67 per week while the program was in effect, and an average of 1.48 students was suspended weekly during the quarter after the program ended. These differences are significant at the .05 level of probability as measured by analysis of variance.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

This study was undertaken to investigate the effects of the Positive Approach to Discipline System for classroom management. This section presents a summary of the methods and procedures used to collect and analyze the data, the findings, and conclusions derived from the study, and the recommendations suggested by the results.

SUMMARY

The problem in this study was to determine the effectiveness of a Positive Approach to Discipline System for classroom management. The purpose of this study was to experimentally validate a method for reducing the high incidence of corporal punishment, suspensions and permanent expulsions in public schools.

There were twelve teachers of seventh grade students utilized in this study. Data were collected on the number of students referred to administration during ten weeks of the first quarter. The same twelve teachers participated in a four-day workshop and ten follow-up sessions. The four-day workshop and ten follow-up sessions were designed for the experimental teachers to become familiar with the concepts and techniques of the Positive Approach to Discipline system. Data were collected on the number of students referred to administration during ten weeks of the second quarter. The PAD system and follow-up sessions were not administered during ten weeks of the third quarter. Data were collected on the twelve teachers of seventh grade students during this period.

The data collected from the study were analyzed for statistical purpose. The analysis of variance with repeated measurement was used to analyze the mean scores derived from each ten-week period. Results were used to reject or retain the hypothesis.

FINDINGS

Statistical treatment of the data comprised the basis for the rejection or retention of the hypothesis was rejected when the probability level computed by the analysis of variance with repeated measurement was equal to or greater than.05. In contrast, probability levels less than or equal to .05 were considered significant, thereby justifying the retention of the hypothesis. The analysis and the interpretation of the data resulted in the following findings:

1. There was a significant reduction in the number of students referred to administration during the quarter in which teachers utilized the PAD System.

2. There was a significant reduction in the number of black students referred to administration during the quarter in which teachers utilized the PAD System.
3. There was no significant difference in the number of times corporal punishment was administered during the quarter in which teachers utilized the PAD System.
4. There was a significant reduction in the number of students suspended from school during the quarter in which teachers utilized the PAD System.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study and subject to the limitations imposed by the research sample, the following conclusions are drawn.

1. The PAD System is effective for reducing the number of students referred to administration for unacceptable classroom behavior.
2. The PAD System is effective in reducing the number of black students referred to administration for unacceptable behaviors in the classroom.
3. The PAD System is effective in reducing the number of students suspended from public school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made.

1. It is recommended that the PAD System be utilized by teachers who are sending students to administration for unacceptable classroom behaviors.
2. It is recommended that the PAD system be implemented in school districts interested in reducing the high incidence of suspensions from school.

3. It is recommended that the PAD System be implemented in urban school settings.
4. It is recommended that the PAD System be implemented in school districts with large black populations.

SUGGESTED RESEARCH

It is suggested that further research be done to determine the following.

1. The effects of the PAD System with the entire staff, and
2. The effects of the PAD System with longer period of training time.

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